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Statement submitted by Defence for Children International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

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Statement

The focus of this Forum is "Ensuring that no one is left behind". Children certainly are still being left behind by the persisting legality and social approval of violent punishment inflicted in their families, schools, places of deprivation of liberty and other settings. Children are now the only citizens of many states who can still be criminally assaulted with impunity — if the assault is disguised as "discipline". The 2030 Agenda, envisages "a world free of fear and violence ... a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination". For children this plainly demands an end to the indignity, injustice and inequality inherent in legalised violent punishment by parents, care-givers and others.

Among the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) 169 targets is target 16.2 — to "end" all forms of violence against children. Achieving prohibition and elimination of violent punishment, the most common form of violence against children, is a major part of fulfilling target 16.2, as well as other goals and targets on equality, health, education and the rights of women and girls.

States have now adopted, as an indicator for target 16.2, measurement of the prevalence of physical and psychological punishment. Thanks to the United Nations Children's fund (UNICEF), we have reliable and shocking baseline information, from its Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) in over 60 states, showing that six in ten (almost one billion) 2-14 year olds had been physically punished at home in the month before the studies.

There is very encouraging and accelerating progress, as the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children documents: more than half of United Nations member states have either prohibited all violent punishment of children, including in the home, or clearly committed to do so. The number of states with a full ban has more than tripled in the decade since 2006. There is very strong — and ever increasing — human rights pressure on all states to prohibit and eliminate violent punishment of children. The issue is raised consistently during the Universal Periodic Reviews of states' overall human rights records.

Of the 22 states undergoing voluntary SDG review during this Forum, six have achieved a full ban on corporal punishment. Another seven have committed to do so. The remaining nine states have neither achieved nor committed to a full ban.

We call on all states which have not yet prohibited violent punishment of children to speedily move to do so, as a critical part of achieving target 16.2. "Ensuring no one is left behind", and "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results", form a clear call for governments: the time has come to act, to ensure that by 2030 children's world no longer has a place for violent punishment.